

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EA-07 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0470
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 06662

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, EGEN, CG, BE
SUBJECT: NEW GOVERNMENT UNVEILS ZAIRE POLICY DURING
MOBUTU VISIT

SUMMARY: MOBUTU MADE USE OF HIS MID-JUNE "JOURNEY OF
APPRECIATION" TO BELGIUM TO PUT THE ARM ON THE NEW
TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT FOR AN ENLARGED MILITARY ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM FOR ZAIRE AND CALLED UPON BELGIUM TO TAKE THE
LEAD IN ORGANIZING A MULTILATERAL "MARSHALL PLAN" TO
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BOLSTER THE ZAIRIAN ECONOMY. NEW FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET
PROMISED THAT BELGIUM WOULD BE RESPONSIVE. BUT FISCAL
AND OTHER OBSTACLES STAND IN THE WAY OF DECISIVE BELGIAN
ACTION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S AFRICA DIRECTOR (LEBRUN) AND
THE ZAIRE DESK OFFICER (JAENEN) HAVE GIVEN US A RUNDOWN

OF THE SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MOBUTU AND THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT DURING THE FORMER'S MID-JUNE "VISIT OF APPRECIATION" TO BRUSSELS. SUBSTANTIVE STATEMENTS WERE CONFINED TO THE REMARKS BY MOBUTU AND KING BAUDOUIN AND THE KING'S LUNCHEON JUNE 11 AND TO THE MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING WHICH TOOK PLACE LATER THAT AFTERNOON.

2. AT THE LUNCHEON THE KING STATED BELGIUM'S COMMITMENT TO WORK IN COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP WITH ZAIRE AND PLACED BELGIUM FIRMLY IN THE CAMP OF THOSE POWERS WORKING FOR MAJORITY RULE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. MOBUTU DELIVERED HIS "THANK-YOU" SPEECH FOR BELGIAN HELP IN REPULSING THE SHABA INVADERS AND WENT ON TO CALL UPON THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT (TINDEMANS AND DEFENSE MINISTER VANDEN BOEYNANTS BEING PRESENT) TO HELP IN THE REORGANIZATION AND MODERNIZATION OF FAZ.

3. MOBUTU NOTED FRANCE'S OFFER TO ASSIST IN DEVELOPING A FAZ PARATROOP UNIT AND REPEATED HIS REQUEST FOR BELGIAN ASSISTANCE IN THE FORMATION AND TRAINING OF FAZ INFANTRY AND LOGISTIC UNITS. MOBUTU'S PRESENTATION OF HIS MILITARY ASSISTANCE NEEDS LACKED DETAIL. HOWEVER, HE TOOK PAINS TO EXPRESS HIS WISHES DIRECTLY TO THE DEFENSE MINISTER, WHO WOULD HAVE TO FIND THE RESOURCES TO MEET ZAIRE'S DEMANDS. MFA OFFICIALS CONSIDER THIS TO BE A PLUS, SINCE THE DEFENSE MINISTRY HAS A TENDENCY TO HIDE BEHIND MFA SKIRTS ON EXPENSIVE AID QUESTIONS.

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4. PRESENT AT THE SUBSEQUENT MINISTERIAL MEETING WERE TINDEMANS, FOREIGN MINISTER HENRI SIMONET AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION MINISTER LUCIEN OUTERS. MOBUTU REVIEWED ZAIRE'S CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION, ASSERTING THAT THE SHABA INVASION HAD MADE A BAD SITUATION WORSE. (THE BELGIANS SUSPECT THAT THE REVERSE MAY BE MORE ACCURATE, THANKS TO A CONSIDERABLE INFLOW OF EMERGENCY HELP.) MOBUTU PROCEEDED TO AN APPEAL FOR A "MARSHALL PLAN" FOR ZAIRE TO BE MOUNTED BY ZAIRE'S FRIENDS. AMONG THEM HE LISTED BELGIUM, U.S., FRANCE, FRG, JAPAN, IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA. HE CALLED UPON BELGIUM TO TAKE THE LEAD IN ORGANIZING THE UNDERTAKING. MOBUTU DID NOT SPECIFY A TARGET AID FIGURE NOR GO INTO DETAIL ON WHAT THE "MARSHALL PLAN" SHOULD COMPREHEND. SIMONET RESPONDED THAT BELGIUM WAS AWARE OF ZAIRE'S URGENT NEEDS, WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO MOBUTU'S REQUEST AND WOULD DISPATCH EXPERTS TO ZAIRE TO STUDY THE SITUATION.

5. JAENEN TOLD US THAT THE MFA HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO DO THE SPADEWORK PREPARATORY TO DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL FOR A MULTI-LATERAL AID PROGRAM FOR ZAIRE. HE SAID ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM MIGHT INCLUDE: CONSOLIDATION OF ZAIRE'S

EXTERNAL DEBT THROUGH 1980, REDUCED INTEREST RATES ON EXISTING DEBTS, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS ASSISTANCE, INCREASE CREDITS TO THE BANK OF ZAIRE, CREATION OF A DEVELOPMENT FUND TO BE ADMINISTERED BY SOFEDE AND THE FUNDING OF THE COMPENSATION ZAIRE IS OBLIGED TO PAY THE LOSERS UNDER THE ZAIRIANIZATION PROGRAM.

6. LEBRUN, GETTING OUT AHEAD OF HIS GOVERNMENT, RAISED INFORMALLY WITH HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IN PARIS THE CONCEPT OF MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE UNDER BELGIAN LEADERSHIP. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE QUAI REACTION WAS

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"BASICALLY NEGATIVE," HE SAID. HE SAID THE FRENCH REGARD THE SUGGESTED BELGIAN INITIATIVE AS "UNNECESSARY," SINCE ADEQUATE MACHINERY ALREADY EXISTS TO FUNNEL ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE, E.G. GISCARD'S AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND.

7. IN A SUBSEQUENT TALK WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL VANDEN BLOOCK WE GOT ANOTHER ANGLE ON THE BELGIAN CONSIDERATION OF HOW TO RESPOND TO MOBUTU'S REQUEST. VANDEN BLOOCK SAYS THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SEES NO ALTERNATIVE TO MOBUTU AND WOULD LIKE TO BE RESPONSIVE TO HIS REQUEST FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE TIGHT BUDGETARY RESTRAINTS, VANDEN BLOOCK DOUBTS THAT BELGIUM WILL BE ABLE TO INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY ITS AID TO ZAIRE. HE ALSO DOUBTS THAT BELGIUM WILL TRY TO ORGANIZE MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE. VANDEN BLOOCK THINKS THAT MOBUTU'S GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN ORGANIZING ANY MULTILATERAL AID PROGRAM. THIS WOULD PUT THE RESPONSIBILITY SQUARELY WHERE IT BELONGS AND WOULD FORCE MOBUTU TO FACE UP TO THE NEED FOR SENSIBLE INTERNAL ECONOMIC POLICIES.

8. VANDEN BLOOCK WOULD APPRECIATE AN INDICATION OF U.S. VIEWS ON MOBUTU'S REQUEST AND HOW TO RESPOND TO IT.

9. COMMENT: THERE IS NO DOUBT THE NEW TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND ACTIVELY TO MOBUTU'S REQUEST, BUT THE OBSTACLES ARE CONSIDERABLE. THE DOMESTIC FISCAL SITUATION ARGUES FOR CUTTING BELGIUM'S AID BUDGET, NOT ENLARGING IT. NEVERTHELESS, THE BELGIANS ARE CONCERNED BY THE ADVANTAGE FRANCE HAS OBTAINED IN ZAIRE BY VIRTUE OF ITS INCISIVE ASSISTANCE TO MOBUTU WHEN HE NEEDED IT. NO ONE HERE DOUBTS THAT THIS WAS DELIBERATELY INTENDED TO BUILD A HEGEMONIAL POSITION FOR FRENCH INTERESTS IN ZAIRE, PRIMARILY AT BELGIUM'S EXPENSE. THE NEW SOCIALIST TEAM AT MFA FEELS IT CANNOT AFFORD TO STAND IMMOBILE. BUT OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WILL EMPHASIZE THE BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS. MOBUTU HAS SHREWDLY INSERTED THE NEEDLE JUST WHERE IT HURTS. CHAMBERS

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